In the name of God amen. The two and twentieth day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred and fortythree, Elizabeth, daughter of John Bate, deo gratias, make this my last will and testament in the county of York, being sick in body but of good and perfect memory praising God for the same. Whereunto I make this my last will and testament, first, to my Creator, hoping unto his mercy and the merits of God upon my Redeemer to save my soul and my soul's release. Secondly, I will and bequeath unto my sons John Bate the eldest, the shirt in the nook and in the bed the furniture. I appoint at the said bedside in the best parlor, the lead in the kitchen and the stores salt in the Walkhouse. Thirdly, I give to John Crotten my souse in lawful term shilling and to Jonathan Crotten my souse. I give to two children either of them ten shilling and to Jonathan Crotten my souse. I give to my wife of Thomas Badege ten shilling and to John Bate my eldest son my grandson and children either of them twenty shilling and I give and bequeath my two brothers Anthony Sherley and Robert Sherley, either of them ten shilling. I give unto Elizabeth Trippett my goddaughter to Thos Trippett her brother either of them ten shilling and to John Green my godson twelve pence. All the rest of my goods, not before devised I give and bequeath unto Elizabeth Trippett, my goddaughter, by Thos Trippett her brother, either of them ten shilling. And I make and appoint the sole executor of this my last will and testament visiting him to see the same truly executed and performed and if there be my sister, loving from within many of walls, to be supervisior hereof and I and my executor with his best advice and consent shall make him baron.
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READING NOTES 14-19
INTRODUCTION

This book offers an introduction to, and practice in, reading and transcribing sixteenth and seventeenth-century documents in English. The examples chosen have been selected to offer experience in a wide range of sources, including those, such as wills and parish records, which family and local historians are most likely to use, and to provide examples of a variety of hands, from those of court officials to those of private individuals. The documents have been arranged in an approximate order of difficulty (although this will vary from person to person), and the reading notes given for each example at the back of the booklet provide a guide for those wishing to start with a particular type of document. All the documents featured are held by the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, University of York, and are published with permission.

TRANSCRIBING THE DOCUMENTS

Learning to read and transcribe early-modern documents in English involves learning about some specific features, such as abbreviations and different ways of forming letters, but also a lot of practice. This book can only provide one or two examples of any particular type of handwriting or document but these do demonstrate most of the difficulties with reading documents at this date. The arrangement in this book, with a plate of each example facing the transcript, allows the user both to try to read or transcribe the document on their own without looking at the transcript provided, and to check their own work against a full transcript as they go, so that letters and words which are proving difficult can be identified and checked. Extra hints are given in the reading notes at the back of the book. Those readers who wish to have the notes beside them as they work through the facsimiles may photocopy the reading notes.

Early modern documents differ from those written today in their letter forms, their use of abbreviations, their spelling and punctuation. Spelling in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was both often different to modern spelling and not standardized. Words were thought of as sounds rather than written forms and one word could be spelt in more than one way within a single document. Many words are written phonetically, particularly in private documents (see for example the letter from the parishioners of Liverton to the archbishop of York, facsimile 8) so that sometimes a confusing word can be understood if it is read aloud. These differences of spelling mean that it is important to note the word down exactly as it is spelt: sometimes what appears to be one word will turn out to be something different altogether, or a word which appears to be nonsense at first will make sense later on. Sometimes a word which is clear on the page still seems to have no meaning – it may be that it is no longer used or that it is a dialect word, in which case the full Oxford English Dictionary or a dialect dictionary will often provide a meaning. Be aware also that even a document apparently all in English may contain some words in a different language: documents issued by the church courts for example often included Latin phrases (see for example John Clitheroe's fine for his wife's behaviour, facsimile 12).

COMMON LETTER FORMS

Letter forms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be very different to those of today and could vary within a document: it is not unusual, for example, to find two types of s in use, one being found mainly at the ends of words. The following alphabet offers some examples of typical letter forms from the examples in this booklet: the specific problem letters in each document are highlighted in the relevant reading notes at the back of the volume.
COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

A number of the examples in this booklet use abbreviated words or parts of words. This system of contracting words is based upon the abbreviations found in medieval documents. Some are still familiar today in a slightly different form — the practice of abbreviating “and” to “&” derives from the earlier abbreviations for the same word, some of which are met in these documents. These abbreviations can seem very difficult to remember at first, but become easier to identify with practice. Examples of the most common abbreviations, taken from the documents in this booklet, are given below: again, the reading notes draw attention to specific problems in each example.

the
that
et (and)
with
item
William

prec
per or par
pro
ner
our
ment
acion

PUNCTUATION

The use of punctuation in the sixteenth seventeenth centuries varied greatly from modern practice, both in its positioning (many documents of this date contain none at all) and in the symbols it uses. For further information see G.E. Dawson & L. Kennedy-Skipton, Elizabethan Handwriting 1500-1650 (London, 1966) and L.C. Hector, The Handwriting of English Documents (2nd ed, London, 1966).

EDITORIAL METHOD

All transcripts reproduce exactly the capitalization and spelling of the original document, in the same line lengths. Letters added to complete abbreviations are in square brackets [ i ]. Where words have been crossed through these are reproduced crossed through in the transcript. Words which are interlined (that is written above the main line of writing) are included in angled lines / . u and v have been adopted in the transcripts in their modern forms for ease of understanding. Dialect or unfamiliar words are explained, where possible, in a footnote. Brief Latin phrases occurring in the documents have been included, with translations given in footnotes.
The names and surnames of all such persons as have been married in the said parish.

Anno dni 1540

Anne dui 1541.

Anne dui 1542.

May
9 Edward Sawer and Agnes Sawer
November
16 John Hudson and Agnes Glaste.

Anne dui 1546.

February
13 Richard Fulkerson and Abit Hewes.

June
24 Thomas Sawer and Abit.

September
18 Thomas Sawer and Elizabeth Sawer.

Anne dui 1547.

June
7 Richard Canwood and Isabet Gault.

January
31 Thomas Daniell and Isabet.

February
22 Edward Skargill and Abit Simpson.

Leonard Northwood and Elizabeth Chapman.

John
26 Robert Hudson and Isabet Godde.

Anne dui 1548.

Anno dni 1544.

Sawer and Agnes

November
15 Robert Soletan and Elizabeth.

Anne dui 1549.

Anno dni 1545.

Sawer and Elizabeth.

November
28 Edward Bennett and Elizabeth Naitcott.
Marriages in Aberford parish (1540-1549)

(PR ABE 1 fo. 26)

Many registers begin in 1558 as a result of Elizabeth I's order of 1597 to copy up baptisms, marriages and burials 'in a fair parchment book'. Many interpreted this as an excuse to copy up only from 1558, not 1538 when registration began. The Aberford register reproduced here is one of these retrospective copies on parchment. A possible explanation for the several missing surnames could be the clerk's inability to read the handwriting of the previous register. The arrangement of parish registers varies. Here the baptisms, marriages and burials are separated in distinct parts of the register. Other places adopted a strict chronological ordering, recording each even as it took place, taking no account of the type of event but only its date.

Mariages. Abberford Mariages.

The names and surnames of all such persons as have been married within the said parish

Anno domini 1540
Nullae Nuptiae
Anno domini 1541.

June
13 Richard Hutchinson and Alice Newes
July
24 Thomas Howdell and Alice
September
18 Lancelot Harrison and Elizabeth Rawson
November
6 Thomas Jackson and Jane Fearby
January
22 William Stamper and Agnes Fetherston
February
28 John Gibson and Mundane Cawood
Anno domini 1542.

November
5 Thomas Marshall and Elizabeth Sampson
Anno domini 1543.

May
28 Robert Ingle and Jane Taylor
July
15 Robert Sotheran and Elizabeth
November
11 William Sawyer and Agnes
Anno domini 1544.

January
17 Peter Sawyer and Elizabeth
Anno domini 1545.
Nullae Nuptiae

Anno domini 1546.

May
9 Edward Sawyer and Agnes Howdell
November
7 John Gibson and Elizabeth Harrison
January
16 John Hudson and Agnes Skafe
Anno domini 1547.

June
7 Richard Cawood and Isabell Harle
July
31 Thomas Daniell and Isabell Wawin
November
22 Edward Skargill and Alice Simpson
24 Leonard Lockwood and Elizabeth Cham...
January
24 John and Margret Lockwood
26 Robert Hudson and Jennet Howdell
Anno domini 1548.

July
29 Richard Williajmson and Jennet Foster
November
4 Henry Webster and Jennet Pickering
15 John Heptonstall and Isabell Howdell
16 Williajm Carter and Margret Sponer
Anno domini 1549.

July
28 Edward Hewet and Elizabeth Baitter/a/m
November
24 Williajm Milner and Jennet Briant

1 No marriages
In the name of God amen. The twelfth day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred and sixty-seven, Elizabeth Brammout of Heath in the county of York, being sick in body but of good and perfect memorie, in prayer for the same, recordeth this my last will and testament. In mind of the following first and principally I recommende my soule to God my Creator, hoping by his merite and the merit of Christ to find my redemption, and to have my soule to rest in heaven. And for such worth substance as I have in this my earthly estate, I bequeath the same to my son John Bate, the eldest in the house. The rest of the substance I bequeath to my two nephews, either of them twenty shillinges. And to my wife, the daughter of Thomas Bridger, ten shillinges. And to John Bate, my eldest son, ten shillinges. And to my two nephews, Anthony Howley, twenty shillinges, and Robert Howley, twenty shillinges. And to Elizabeth Wright, my goddaughter, ten shillinges. And to William Wright, my brother, ten shillinges. And to John Green, my godson, twelve pence. And to all the rest of my goods, and I desire that all the rest of my goods shall be disposed of, and that my bequest be made as in the present testament. And I make my executors of this my last will and testament, Anthony Howley and William Wright. And I desire that the same be performed and executed, as I desire my executor to pay to my son John Bate, of walkes to be given me at my request, and to use my executor to the best of his power, and to give unto him for a token of his service, ten shillinges. And I desire this to be my last will, done in presence of John Howley and William Howley. Amen.

Suffred Elizabeth Brammout.
Until January 1858, nearly all wills had to be proved in the Church Courts, most of them in the courts of the bishops or archbishops. Original wills, like Elizabeth Beaumont’s will here, were exhibited in the courts and copies were also transcribed into the probate registers. Note the interlining of “iurat” (Latin for “he has sworn”) towards the end of the document, by the name of the executor, and the names of William Rawson and William Wordsworth, the witnesses. These were added when the will was proved and indicate that these men have sworn the necessary oath to administer Elizabeth’s goods as laid down in her will.

In the name of God Amen the Two and Twentith daie of August in the year of o[ur] Lord One Thousand Six Hundreth Forty and Three I Elizabeth Beaumont of Sheffield in the county of york wid[ow] beeing sick in body but of good and p[er]fect memorie (I praise god for the same) doe ordeine and make this my p[re]sent last will and testam[en]t in man[er] and forme folowing First and principally I comend my soule to god my Creator hoping by his mercies and the merittes of [Chris]t Jesus my Redeemer to have my sinnes p[ar]doned and my soule saved, and my body to the earth And for such worldly substance as the Lord in his mercy hath bestowed on mee my minde and will is shall bee disposed of as foloweth First I will that my debtes mortuary and fun[er]all charges shall bee paid out of my whole goodes Item I give and bequeath unto my sonne John Bate the chist in the nooke end in the house the bedd w[i]th the furniture and a preser att the said beddesyde in the Over parlor, the Lead in the kitchen and the steepefatt in the Malthouse Item I give to Henry Treeton my sonne in lawe Tenn shillinges and to Jonathan Treeton and Elizabeth Treeton his Two children either of them Tenn shillinges Item I give to Mary wife of Thomas Badger Tenn shillinges and to John Bate and Hellen Bate my grandchildren either of them Twenty shillinges It[e]m I give and bequeath to my Two brethren Anthony Howsley and Robert Howsley either of them Twenty shillinges It[e]m I give unto Elizabeth Trippett my goddaughter and to Thomas Trippett her brother either of them Tenn shillinges and to John Greene my godsonne Twelve pence. All the Rest of my goodes and chattels not before devised given or disposed of I give devise and bequeath unto my sonne Anthony Bate \iurat/ whom I make and appoint the sole and only Executo \r/ of this my last will and testam[en]t desiring him to see the same truly executed and p[er]formed And I desire my very loving frend Will[i]a)m Rawson \iurat/ of walkley to bee sup[er]visor herof and to ayde my Executo w[i]th his best advice and Councell And I give unto him for a token of Remembrance Tenn shillinges In testimony wherof I have herunto sett my hand and seale and declared this to bee my last will, In p[re]sence of Will[i]a)m Rawson. \iurat/ John Rawson and W[jillia]m Wadsworth. \iurat/ Subscr[ibed] Elizabeth Beaumont
21st February 1699.

A Decree was obtained to be done by

Robert Dimore of Foster Shires of the

Yorks of York.

The said Robert Dimore shall be present in the

presence of the Bishop of York in the said day of 20th. Instant, and therefore the present of

Mr. Joseph Daniel and two others to be brought

by the said Mr. Daniel the said present at followeth.

[Handwritten text continues]
Penance was assigned to particular individuals, usually by the Church Courts or the bishop’s or archdeacon’s visitation court, in declarations such as this. After the reformation, the guilty person had to stand in the parish church, in public, with bare head, legs and feet, dressed in a white sheet and carrying a wand, and to confess his fault and express penitence. A certificate stating that the penance had been performed had to be sent to the bishop’s office by the minister: in this case the certificate has been written on the foot of the declaration.

21 Octobris 1699

A Declaration enjoyned to be done by
Robert Dinmore of Acaster Malbis of the
Dioces of Yorke.

The said Robert Dinmore shall be present in the vicarage-house of Bishopthorpe upon Monday the 30th day of October instant, between the hours of one and three in the afternoon, when and where in the presence of
Mr. Adams present vicar of Bishopthorpe aforesaid
Mr. Joseph Daniel and two others to be brought by the said Mr. Daniel he shall declare as followeth
(vide elice)
Whereas I Robert Dinmore doe stand convict in the Ecclesiastical Court at Yorke for saying that Bess Lowther servant to Mr. Joseph Daniel was with Child and that the said Mr. Daniel had gotten her with Child on the Green-Bed at Bishopthorpe and had given her money to lay it upon his man Ned Carter – I do here acknowledge and declare that I had no grounds or reason to speak any such words and do desire that Mr. Daniel may be noe worse thought off by reason of any words proved to be spoken by me.

These may certify that Robert Dinmore did attend at the vicarage-house of Bishopthorpe on Monday the 30th of this instant, in the afternoon, and Mr. Daniel not appearing, the said Robert Dinmore did in obedience to the order of the court make a Declaration according to the tenor of these presents before me and 3 other witnesses; witness my hand.

And of the performance hereof he is to Certifie under the hand of the said Mr. Adams at the Consistory Office at Yorke on or before the First day of November next together with these presents.

Tho[mas] Empson
Notarius Publicus
The presentment of Christopher Bill & William Metcalf, chaplains serving of y'chappell of sonrably for y'year 1678

Imprimis
we present Peter Darby & 3 Papists
Donothy his wife and Mrs. Best

we present Peter Dail: quaker

we present Matthew Moxley of
Saman Bill of sonrably

for not giving an account
of his marriage & for refusing to
show a certificate by whom, when or
where they were married

The presentment of Tho. Banks
curate

Imprimis
we present William Metcalf for
not paying his due to y'church. Curate
of sonrably

we present Susanna Bill now wife to
Matthew Moxley who was then with in
the Chappell of sonrably for not observing
y'fast day appointed by y'kings edict. Also
but using servile works in y'time of divine
service

Tho. Banks Curate
The Churchwardens and Curate of Sowerby present the wrong-doers of their chapelry (1678)
(YV/ChP 1677/8)

Presentments, statements made on oath, were made by churchwardens and clergy of a parish during a bishop’s or archdeacon’s visitation. Members of the parish who had broken the Church’s laws were brought to the attention of the visitation courts. Those found guilty would have been prescribed public penances (see p.3) which in some cases they were allowed to commute for a cash payment. If such penances were not carried out the guilty parties were excommunicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imprimis</th>
<th>The presentments of Christopher Bell [and] William Metcalf chappel-wardens of the chappell of Sowerby for the year 1678.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Imprimis we pre[es]ent Peter Darley [and] Anna Best Papists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Item we pre[es]ent Peter Dail: quaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imprimis we pre[es]ent Matthew Morley of Thirsk [and] Susane Bell of Sowerby/ for not giving an account of their marriage [and] for refusing to shew a certificate by whom, where or when they were married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imprimis I pre[es]ent William Metcalf for not paying his dues to the church curate of Sowerby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Item I pre[es]ent Susanna Bell now wife to Matthew Morley who was then with in the Chappelry of Sowerby for not observing the fast day appointed by the kings proclama[ci]on but using servile work in the time of divine service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tho[mas] Bankes Curate
John yarke to the Exchequer: Pat about 3000 pence
is his descent Betwixt Saund and Sand, the father to the Sand
was 

Swan and one of his gambles died. He
said Sand and Swan's marriage was at Sand's
friends in York's at one time. Emigrated offer his descent aged for wise.
He was at and said to sell him. So
word: Some for paper and such was
and my friend would save me so many
in Chrisway and so is. But a girl's young
may I want may not find in my
store to marry him. And at Dryn. 


Depends Sande. Sir. And all must be
Agnes Musgrave’s distress over her forthcoming marriage (1556)

This is part of a court case, heard in the church courts between Nicholas Fairfax, knight, on the one part and Henry Curwen and his wife Maria and Agnes Musgrave, alias Wharton, wife of Richard Fairfax, knight, deceased, upon the other. Nicholas had declared Agnes to have been married to Henry Curwen before her marriage to Richard Fairfax, which would have made both her marriage to Richard and the marriage of Henry and Maria invalid. The defendants proved in the courts that their marriages were both valid, and Nicholas was ordered to pay their expenses in the case.

Cases in the Church Courts were largely dependent on the evidence of witnesses and this document is part of the evidence of one of these, whose name does not survive in the records. The extract includes two Latin phrases. It begins “Super quarto articulo examinatus dicit” “Concerning the fourth article the witness says”. The complaints of the defendant in each case were laid out in numbered points known as articles, and witnesses were asked to comment upon each article as it was read to them. The articles for this case do not survive, so we cannot know exactly what this witness was being questioned about. The passage ends, as did the reply of each witness to each article “et aliter nescit deponere” that is “and he knows nothing else to say in testimony”.

Super quarto articulo examinatus dicit that about xvi yeres
since he this deponent Beinge in the house
of the said Lord wharton father to the said
Mistres Agnes and one of his chamber did see
the said Agnes musgrave wepe at sundrye
tymes in corners. And at one tyme
Amonges others this deponent asked her where whic/
she wepte and she said to tell him she
wold shewe her father. And then she
said my frendes wold have me to mary
Mr Curwen and he is But a cersed yonge
man[n] And I might may not fynde in my
herte to mary him. And at dyv[er]s tymes
since he haith harde hir say that she
wold nev[er] have him Ett al[ite]r nescit
depon[er]e. 2

1 Concerning the fourth article the examinant says
2 And he knows nothing else to say in testimony
A note of the georlois palus of the fyturit of Malton in the Countie of York.

The same doth consist of these particulars: the benefite outhing first of those rooms of old malton in georlois palus.

First the tithe gray in georlois palus.

First the tithe wool cumb in georlois palus.

First the Easter books georlois.

First the tithe rigys and soms.

First the tithe of the west of a farme, note to.

First tithe of now malton mines.

First the tithe corns o gas of windham, a village.

First wealott of the time.

First tithe of corn, upland, anyone or.

Note: totalis a Chicken.

Count for the georlois out to the 2d: Mrs.比较高 gift.

And for the poor minister diasiric.

Remains do clar o chicken.

Furthermore out of tank above paid of willem euro doth pay georlois.

For: Maed, waste for hale, few good to come, of the remnant.

And a hale of now west to the minister. 2d minister of wages of.

Note: that there is never hale waste, hale barns, or barns strong.

Nor any glebo land.
The church of Old Malton lists its annual income  (1611)
(Ter. L. Old Malton 1611)

When bishops undertook visitations of the parishes within their dioceses (in theory every three years, but in practice less often) each parish was obliged to provide an inventory (listing the movable goods belonging to the church) and a terrier detailing the church’s income from its immovable goods: that is, the tithes and rents it obtained from its land and buildings: indeed, the lands and buildings usually made up the bulk of these terriers (the note at the end of this document stating that there is no glebe makes this an unusual return). These terriers often survive in diocesan archives.

Notice particularly the use of “li” with an abbreviation sign to stand for pounds. This stands in fact for “libri”, the Latin for pounds, and can be used for either money or weight.

A note of the yerelie value of the Rectorie of Malton in the Countie of Yorke

The same doth consist of these p[ar]ticuler p[ro]fit[es] and benefitt[es] ensewing

First of tithe corne of old malton in yerelie value
It[e]m the tieth hay in yerelie value
It[e]m the tieth woll and Lambe in yerelie value
It[e]m the Easter booke yerelie
It[e]m the tieth pigg[es] and hennes
It[e]m the tieth of the withes a farme, w[i]th the tieth of New malton milnes
It[e]m the tieth Corne and hay of wickham, a village or hamlett of the p[ar]ish
It[e]m tieth hemp, aples, unyons etc
Sum[m] a totalis\(^1\)

Deduct for the yerelie rent to the L[ord] Archbishop and for the poore ministers salarie
so remaines de claro\(^2\)

W[I]ch rent of Lxxx li abovesaid S[i]r will[i]a|m Eure doth pay yerelie to S[i]r mar[meduke] Wyvell for some few yeres to come of the remnant of an old Lease, over and besides the rent to the Archbishop and the ministers wages of ix li.

note that their is neither p[ar]sonage house, tieth barne or barne stead nor any gleabe land.

\(^1\) sum total
\(^2\) clear [after all payments are made]
Apr 14th 1684

These are to certify whom they may concern'd office.
Harrison being desirous to undertake the office of a Midwife
& herefore having practiced with good success we who
have experienced her skill & dexterity & examined her
judgment hope for a future she may be useful & under god
an instrument for good amongst us. Therefore we her
neighbour in & parish of Bedford) humbly desire she
may have licence under Seal of Office to practice
as Midwife amongst us & her adjacent Neighbour & to
this our humble request (in her behalf) we have set our
hand & day & year above written

Eliz. Johnson
Margaret Robson her mk
Elizab. Ford her mlk
Ellin Hodgson her mlk
Mary Brown her mlk
Sam Bronwe
Mary Batch
Habell Harrison her mlk
Jane Sailor her mlk
Jane Faiteson
Alice Harrison is nominated as a midwife (1684)
(Nom. M. 1682/2)

To practise as a midwife, schoolmaster or surgeon required a licence. To get such a licence the applicant had to prove both that they were competent (as this nomination attests) and that they conformed to the beliefs of the Church of England.

Notice the number of women signing by mark: that they did not write, however, did not imply that they would not have been able to read.

Apr[il] the 14th 1684

These are to certifie whom they may concern th[at] Alice Harrison being desirous to und[e]rtake the Office of a Mid-wife and heretofore having practised w[i]th good successe we who have experienced her skill and dexterity and examined her judgm[en]t hope th[at] for the future she may be usefull and (und[e]r god) an instrum[en]t for good amongst us. Therefore we (her neighbours in the parish of Beeford) humbly desire she may have Licence und[e]r the seal of the Office to practise as Mid-wife amongst us and her adjacent Neighbours and to this o[u]r humble request (in her behalf) we have sett our hands the day and year above written

Elizabeth Johnson
Margaret Robson her m[ar]k
Elizabeth Ford her m[ar]k
Ellin Hodgson her m[ar]k
Mary Brown her m[ar]k
Ann Browne
Mary Booth
Isabell Harrison her m[ar]k
Jane Nailor her m[ar]k
Jane Taiteison
Linton.

To Bishop,

We parishioners of Linton all of us which got to the Church were not likely to make our petition to you, and would beseech you to make it helps in this matter, for the Church Go for mon. Jake this Church of ours at Linton Can, be provided our parish church for fifty years ago and hath been wanting in London in fair m. no fall lost the church lands and others upon the basalt of fifty pounds in the year his doing hands of war Can not have doing so arable every sabbath day but it should every week after that war have been used good neglected for work and wanted doing so arable for four or five sabbaths all to go then but now marred if war lack doing so arable for m. no fall South Linton Vb. to pull down our church beseech that he is a备注woe man among us in paying of just for he will neither pay to the king nor to the poor with out Compulsion for want of knowledge in this matter war desire your help to and for Loafe you to the procession of your maker for we rest your sorrow.

To Com, mando.

This is given Under all our hands with in the parish of Linton.
The Parishioners of Liverton complain of neglect (1698)
(Bp C & P I/13)

This is the first letter of complaint sent by the parishioners of Liverton to the archbishop and is undated. The second complaint, dated 4 October 1698, was followed apparently by a letter to the vicar from the archbishop, to which James Lowde replied, on 14 October 1698, claiming that the parishioners did indeed have a sermon and prayers every Sunday. On 17 October a petition was sent by the parishioners of Easington, stating that Liverton had never been better served and that Mr Neville, the curate, was a man of “sober life and conversation”. The lack of any surviving additional correspondence on the subject may indicate that the archbishop considered the matter closed.

Liverton

L[ord] Bishop
Wee parisheners of Liverton all of us which
doe goe to the Church wee doe heireby make oure
Petison to you, and woulde desier youe to make
us helpe in this matter, for the Church
goforment sake this Church of oures at Liverton
Can be proved an anchsent Church for fifty
yeares ago: and hath \had/ devine searves Mr Lowde and
his Curit Mr nefell Lettes the gleab Lande and
tyeth neare upon the valley of, fifty poundes
In the yeare tis veiry harde if wee Can not
have devine searvis every Sabeth day but it
douth very well aserre\(^1\) that wee have been vere sore
neglected, for wee have wanted divine searvis for
four or five Sabethes all to gether but noe marvell
if wee Lack devine searvis for Mr Nefell douth
Threaten us to pull dowen our Church be sides
that he is a Refractres\(^2\) man among us in paying
of seses\(^3\) for he will neither pay to the king
nor to the poore with out Compullshion
for want of knowledge in this matter we disire
your helpe and soe Leafe you to the protxson
of youre maker soe wee Rist your searvents

To Com,mande

This is given under \all/ our handes with in
the parish of Liverton

\(^1\) asert, avow  
\(^2\) refractious  
\(^3\) taxes
The inventory of all the goods and chattels moveable and immovable of Edward Etherington late a greatSTEP: 8.4
Edward Etherington late of Great Bridge, deceased,
Indifferently prayed by George Etherington his son and
Etherington and Mary, his wife, and George Gunton,
the twenty-third day of September 1589.

In primit't in his parlour.

In his wosters.

In his ownd, sugar and guidle with other furnitures.

In his bed chamber.

In the hall.

In primit't two tables was framed that surnamed two refires.

And by one with glass and candle in one, with other implement.

Two rows of plate was sealed and other furnitures to two.

Belonging for eight horses.

A long box for cuses, a shafe of arrows and a footbow.

A cistern with the furniture thereof belonging.

It seemes to be some to be some.

In the bedchamber.

In primit't a paint of gallonbeakers, m, glasses, fullers two

And by one with a jar and boxes with other kitchen implements.

Brass pots and pottries.

Brass and pellots.

Springs barre, ropes, yeo's, yauing, paint, burnes, painted.

With other implements.

In the 12vens house.

In primit't two lead a side: sat a

Maffat that regard was other

Implementes.
The late Thomas Etherington's goods are recorded (1590)
(Precentorship Wills Jan 1589/90)

This is part of the inventory of the goods of Thomas Etherington, recently deceased. Inventories of a person's belongings were drawn up after their death by their executors (or the administrators of their goods if there was no will) as part of the process of dividing up these belongings. Such inventories principally survive in the main Exchequer and Prerogative Courts of York between and c. 1680 and c. 1750, but survive earlier and later in many of the other, peculiar courts. Thomas Etherington's land and belongings had all been within the jurisdiction of the precentorship and his will was therefore proved in the precentorship court.

The Inventory of all the good[es] and cattall[es] moueable and unmoveable of Thomas Etherington Laite of great Driffeld deceased
the xxvijth day of September 1589.

In primis in his purse
It[em] in his Coffers
It[em] his sworde dagger and girdle with other furniture
for the body
It[em] all his Apparrell

In the halle
In primis two tables with fraimes thre fourmes two chaires one bynch with glasse windowes with other Implement[es] iiiij li
It[em] two coates of plate w[i]th speres and other furniture therto belonginge for light horsemen iiij b vj s viij d.
It[em] a longe bowe his quiver a shafe of arrowes and a stone bow
It[em] a Calleverl with the furniture therto bellonginge
It[em] brandirons tonges bellowes and other fiery Instrument[es]

In the kitchinge
In primis a paire of gallowbawkes w[i]th other hooks kilp[es] two paire of tonges an Iron shovell w[i]th other fiery Implem[en]t[es]
It[em] brasse pott[es] and posnett[es] 4
It[em] cawdrons and kettles

In the Brewhouse
In primis two lead[es] a gwile fat 6 a masfat 7 thre coolers with other Implement[es]

1 a light musket
2 iron bar in a chimney from which hooks for pots are hung
3 handles of pots or cauldrons
4 small, metal, three footed pots for boiling
5 cob irons, the irons upon which a spit turns
6 a vat in which wort ferments
7 a mashing vat
To the most reverend father in Christ. Devon by grace pro- 
dominant Archbishops of York princes of England and 
metropolitans, &c. 

Sensibly comprising. Thanking God ye grace ye prelate o

churchwardens and offers the prayers of o

[Rest of the text is not legible due to the handwriting style.]
The parishioners of Burton Pidsey complain of desertion (1577 x 1588)
(HC CP nd/3)

This petition to the High Commission court at York requests the replacement of the vicar of Burton Pidsea, a papist who fled to Flanders, and his substitute, apparently a drunkard. Ecclesiastical commissions were established under Queen Elizabeth for the northern and southern provinces, and at diocesan level. Unlike the ordinary ecclesiastical courts the northern and southern province courts were formerly independent, and the northern court had a close relationship with the activities of the Council in the North. The provincial court at York heard many cases (including cases involving recusants, and sometimes dealing with as many as 60 hearings in a day) from its establishment in 1561 until 1641. The cases have produced a great deal of documentation – indeed, the York records are easily the most extensive of any of the ecclesiastical commissions.

To the most reverende father in Christe Edwine by goddes providence Archbushoppe of yorke primate of Englande and metropolitane and others his g[race's] associat[es] in the hie co[m]mission

Humbly compleyning sheweth unto your grace your poore oratours the churchwardons and others the p[ar]ishners of Burton Pidsey all[as] Piddlesburton of your g[race's] diocese of yorke, that where there is a greate flocke of people in Piddlesburton aforesaid desirous to bee enstructed and tought their duties toward[es] god and man: and where the said vicar havinge the cure of their soules and bounde to feeede them w[ith] goddes worde: So it is (most reverende) that the said vicar not regardinge th his said charge, nor tendeinge the souls helth of his fl ocke, at Easter last paste departed awaie and forsooke his said cure sithens 1 wandringe and travelyinge a broade in places unknowen beinge a notorious and knowen papiste and a greate misliker of the godlie religion nowe publiquely receaved and therfore (as of late hee confessed to one that met him by chaunce in London waie) he said he was travelyinge toward[es] Flanders, hoping belike to have relief amungst the papist[es] of those parties and sithens the premisses he never came at his said vicaredge, / And further if it like your grace the said vicar at his departure left in his place one Thomas Moore clerke a man of greate disorder and evell behaviour occasioninge much strife and contention amongst the people and gevinge evell example of lief by his dailey and intollerable drinkinge and frequentinge of ale houses and other unmeete places, and besides that gevinge no regarde howe he discharged the said cure. And albeit he have \ bene/ by the us charitably exhorted oft and manie times to amende his lief; nev[er]theles he p[er]sisteth in his evils more and more to the daunger of his soule and greate Feare of others. May it therfore please your grace and said associat[es] to provide for the said cure, and to call before you the said Tho[mas] Moore to answeare to such ar[tic]les as shallbe objected against him touchinge the premisses accordinge to equetie and Justice, And this in the waie of charitie.

1 since then
In the good presence and at the said James
Samuel not having the heart of God before God
not you regarding the works of sin and sinning
from their said marriage and as in the two lives
foremien¿ now and forever, and this bond last
night intercepted the said Elizabeth. But now in
itself cometh
the said Elizabeth being without
begotten by him and being Lawful. And if gone on to shew
one dayings he came into and being ordained unto Saturday
as it seemed and furnishable good for and the
use belonging to the for the said
Lawful and to be lawful of his first the second
great Leander of for lives too great
and the sound of nature and will to sufficient of all thing

But as to before

So does prompt and ask that about a space or two
after his said and Elizabeth having in their body being
divided as for second day to the said Samuel cometh
in and myd® and put got into his body whereby lay
and missed how our said house goth broken and body unappoint
unto that as sound so to two off the great rock and
other down into and thoroughly the great rock
and moreover given him and laid into him as great
off Lawful in her preserving fine and set
from I do for after that manner and theelsea of
her body to itself by I say, Samuel was kept a
beyond for a long time a. For he does an add
then he does ground and are it of the birth
of her Lord and to the said Thomas in one of
his beautiful feb and it must be done, boat a noble
Say the Lord and Elizabeth it worth, that be said big
for this, and for August so last, colours pulled it
from from our last at upon box ground and set
forever that so broke, the people of his Lord, to
his good Law, of last days souls you will happen
of it, of the time or as to fore.
Elizabeth Cowlton complains of ill-treatment (1624)
(HC CP 1624/3)

The excerpt below is from the articles of a case heard in the Church Courts in which Elizabeth Cowlton complains of her ill treatment at the hands of her husband, James. There are no further surviving details of this case, but such complaints were common in cases where the wife sought “separation of bed and board”: the nearest to a divorce allowed at this time. Such cases were usually heard in the Church Courts until the divorce act of 1842.

3 Item she doth propound and articulate That the said James Cowlton not having the feare of god before his eyes nether regarding the mutuall love w[i]ch ought to be betwixt man and wife hath divers and sundry tymes since ther said marriage and within the one two three fower five sixe and seaven 1/8, 9/ years last past hath evill intreated the said Elizabeth his wife in very uncivill fashion and one tymes the said Elizabeth being w[i]th child begott by him and being twenty weekes gone or therabout one evening he came unto her being overcome w[i]th drinkke as it seamed and furiously beat her and used such violence unto her that he caused her presently to fall into/ 'e laboure and to be deliv[er]ed of her child \long before her tyme/ to the great danger of her life, the great p[er]ell of his owne soule and evill example of others. And she doth articulate as before.

4 Item she doth propound and articulate that about a yeare or two after, she the said Elizabeth lyeing in child bedd being deliv[er]ed of her second Child he the said James came in, uncivillly and put his hand into the bedd where she lay and nipped her and did bruse here body in such violent sort that she cryd for helpe of the grace wife 1 and other wifes standing by, and therupon the grace wife did reprehend him for it and said unto him ah theife doest thou come in to her pretending kindness and dost thou use her after this manner, w[i]thich places of her body so nipped by the said James was blacke and blew for a long tyme aft[er]. And she doth articulate as before.

5 Item she doth propound and articulate that aft[er] the birth of her third child the said James Cowlton in one of his drunken fit[es] did extreamly beat and violently hayle the said Elizabeth his wife. And she having her child in her Armes he w[i]th violence pulled it from her and cast it upon the ground w[i]th such force that he broke the backe of the said child, to the great danger of his owne soule and evill example of others, And she doth articulate as before.

1 midwife
John Clitherow is fined for his wife's behaviour (1578)

(HE AB 9 fo. 165)

This was the fourth of 65 cases heard by the eleven High Commissioners sitting on 6 October 1578, beginning between 9 and 11 o'clock. The first Monday after St. Andrew's day in 1578 was Monday 1 December, giving John Clitherow 56 days to find the considerable sum of 30 shillings. A skilled craftsman, such as a master mason, was paid at the rate of 6d a day in York at this period. Margaret Clitherow was martyred in 1586 (see p. 13).

Officium dominorum contra
Margareta[m] Clithero uxore[m]
John[ann]is Clithero de civitate Ebor

She is assigned
to appear this day
and you are ordered that
her husband shall pay
for her offence in refusing
the church etc as the court shall
award unless she be reformed and
frequent the church in the mean season, as by law she is
bound 2 Quod die commentarii Joh[ann]es
clithero et monitis est ad comparandum
post meridiem et ad tunc solvendum
Clithero com[m]pari et solvit manibus
Edwardi Fawcett sumam
Et habet ad certificandum
Lune post Andree
And thereafter the said Clitherow entered a new bond
and thereupon you were decreed that no advantage
should be taken against him for his other bonds

1 This section translates as: Office of the judges against Margaret Clitherow, wife of John Clitherow of the City of York.

2-2 This section translates as follows: On which day John Clitherow appeared before the court and was ordered to appear in the afternoon, and then to pay 2 shillings for each week. And afterwards the said Clitherow appeared on that day and paid into the hands of Master Edward Fawcett the sum of 30 shillings for his wife's neglect of duty, which sum the said Master Fawcett received.

3-3 This section translates as: And he has until the Monday after the feast of [Saint] Andrew to certify that he has done as the court ordered.
The bondman of th's obligator is bound that if Margaret,
the servant of him, the above bondman, fail to go to
prison in the fast day of work, and appointed to remain
not in his said house bounds for any days of said
prison, the said bondman shall pay and do in said
prison, the said days of. Firstly now, and
therefore twenty pence and above, that equivalent in prize, at before
religion, and do particularly make, and in that realm of
as far as the harm or injury and all the estate of
woman, and all the goods and money, the sum of
do not consume nor take, or any with his bed, or with
as much as a pound of religion, and to conform the
that command me, and to conform the
and also conform the money, to the due and obtain
the ward, and to need money, and to
the ward, and be in full price and
reward.

[Signature]

[Seals]
John Clitherow is bound for his wife’s good behaviour (1584)

(HC Bond 101)

Bonds, of which this is an excerpt, such as this one adopt a standard format (or diplomatic) whatever their purpose. They can be found, for example to guarantee the repayment of a loan, to guarantee that a marriage to be performed is legal in all senses, to guarantee the correct execution or administration of a deceased’s estate. The sum of money always mentioned in the first part of the bond (not reproduced here) did not have to be paid unless the party to the bond fails to keep his obligation, spelled out in the second part of the bond, transcribed below. The first part of this bond was in Latin and has therefore been omitted. Note that although John Clitherow did not write his name, that does not imply that he could not read.

Margaret Clitherow of York was martyred in 1586. She was an active Catholic who was arrested upon several occasions for her religious activities and was eventually crushed to death for refusing to plead when on trial for concealing priests.

The condition of this obligation is such that if Margaret Clitherow wife of John the abovebound John Clytherow now prisoner in the castle of York and appointed to remain within her said husband’s house till the sixth day of July next coming do yield herself prisoner again in the said castle of York the said sixth day of July next, and there continue and abide true prisoner in state as before unless before that time she conform herself to godly religion now publicly received within this realm of England, And do from thenceforth orderly and dutifully repair to her parish church or other usual and allowed place of common prayer and there quietly abide and reverently hear divine service and sermons. If also in the meantime she do not confer nor talk with any disobedient persons or persons in matters of religion to confirm her in that erroneous opinion she now holdeth, neither seduce any now conformable from there dutifulness and obedience toward their religion now established within this realm of England. Then this obligation to be void and of none effect or else to stand and be in full force and virtue.

John Clyderowe

Sealed and Delivered in our presence

ad usum p[re]di[ctum]

Henry Proctor NP
Rychard maltby

1 to the aforesaid use
2 Notary Public
This hand is a very clear and careful one, reflecting, perhaps, the official nature of the parish register. Note that although the majority of the text is in English, Latin phrases, such as 'Nullae Nuptiae' for 'No marriages' persist as a reminder that this is a document created by the Church. Some letter forms need particular care. Notice the shape of the "h", used as both a capital — where it could be mistaken for an L — and as a lower-case letter within names such as Richard or Thomas. The capital "I" and "J" are identical — a practice left over from medieval Latin where they were not distinguished: compare for example "June" and "Isabell" in the Marriages for 1547. The capital "R", as in "Richard" should not be confused with a "K", and amongst the lower case letters "e" and "r" could be misread, and "s" appears in two forms, one commonly used at the end of words and the long "s", similar to a modern "f". This example also demonstrates the problems of faded handwriting — here on the outside edge of the page, which makes the names, which are difficult to guess from their context, hard to read.

ELIZABETH BEAUMONT’S WILL
Exchequer Court will, Doncaster Deanery, September 1644

This is another example of a clear and careful hand. As in the first example, note the identical capital "I" and "J" as in "I" and "John". Other capital letters which may cause particular problems are "G", "T", "C", "R", "H" and "O". The common use of "ff" to make a capital "F" (as in "First") is exemplified here. Many of the lower case letters are similar to today's letter forms, but note "r" and "e", which can be mistaken for each other (as in "over") and particularly the "st" and "sl" ligatures which are common at this date. This will also provides examples of the use of abbreviations, many originally used in documents in medieval Latin but then adapted for use in English documents. The in-fills at the end of some lines are easy to mistake for abbreviations, although in fact they are used to prevent spurious additions to the document, and they should be noted. The sign for "and" is particularly common and other abbreviation signs, which will be met in numerous documents, include "pre" (as in "present") "per" or "par" (as in "performed" and "perfect") and "with" for "with", and the typical abbreviation for "...ment" at the end of words (as in "testament"). "xpt" for Christ is also a long-standing abbreviation, based upon Greek. Names can also have particular standard abbreviations — the abbreviation used here for William is very common. Other words have just a general abbreviation sign and their missing letters must be gained from the context — see widow. The abbreviated "Item" (meaning also) is an example of the continued use of Latin — this is found particularly in documents which include lists — such as the list of bequests in a will or in an inventory. Another Latin word found in this will is the interlined "iurat" meaning he has sworn — referring to the executor's oath to administration the testator's goods honestly, and the witnesses' oaths to prove the will.
This is an interesting document, providing examples of more than one person’s handwriting: that of Thomas Empson, notary public (Notarius Publicus) who has written the declaration, and that of Thomas Adam, minister of Bishopthorpe, who has added the certificate in the bottom left-hand corner. Both hands are clear. Notice the ornate capital “T” and the capital “E” of the declaration, the lower case “r” and the lower case “c” with its characteristic circumflex above the letter which is easily mistaken for an abbreviation sign. Lower case “k” can also be confusing, and note the combination “ck”. Both hands make use of “=” as a hyphen, again very common. A variety of abbreviations are used in this document. As in the previous example, note the abbreviation for “per” (“performance”) and “pr” for “pre” as in “presents”. The abbreviation for declaration, where the i of “cion” is omitted and a line above it signifies there has been an omission, is very frequently found in words ending “cion” or “tion”. Particularly important is the use of “y” for “the”. Here the “y” is a version of the Anglo-Saxon thorn, standing for “th”, and so the word should always be rendered as “the” not “ye” in transcriptions. In Thomas Adam’s certificate, note the use of “y” for “that”, using the same principles as “ye” above, the common abbreviation “Bp” for Bishop incorporated in the place name Bishopthorpe and the abbreviated form of “er” in “other” and “order” as well as the abbreviation sign for “and”, and “Bp” for “October” – variations of this, such as “9br” for November and “10br” for “December” are frequently used. Both hands demonstrate the use of “:” to abbreviate common Christian names such as “Tho.” for Thomas and “Hen.” for Henry. Also note the use of infills at the end of lines.

THE CHURCHWARDENS AND CURATE OF SOWERBY PRESENT THE WRONG-DOERS OF THEIR CHAPELRY

Notice particularly the capital “P” with its open top, as well as lower case “e” and “r” and “d” with its open bottom loop. Also note the letter “h” in the abbreviated signature of Christopher Bell. This document contains few abbreviations but note “pr” for “pre” in present and “ye” for “the”, as well as abbreviated Christian names, and the abbreviation for “and”. “Proclamacion” includes two abbreviations, that at the start for “pro” and also “acion” at the end of the word, both abbreviations being used in medieval Latin hands originally. “Item”, as in Elizabeth Beaumont’s will, meaning also, is used here in conjunction with another Latin word, “Imprimis”, meaning firstly, and commonly rendered “Inprimis” in documents.
AGNES MUSGRAVE’S DISTRESS OVER HER FORTHCOMING MARRIAGE

This is an example of a more hurried hand, as could be expected from a scribe taking notes on a witness’s evidence. The mixture of Latin and English is a result of its position as a legal document, in a court which still produced its standard documentation principally in Latin, and the fact that it was a transcript of the witness’s own evidence spoken in English. What abbreviations occur here are largely found in the Latin – see the abbreviations for “super” (over), “articulo” (article) and “examinatus” (examinant), all designed to make frequently used words quick to write, and the standard “er/re” abbreviation in “deponere”, repeated in the English “dyvers”, and the “es” abbreviation. Note particularly the lower case “h” which is frequently repeated throughout the deposition, and also the lower case “r” and the two forms of lower case “e” – often difficult letters in hands of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This document also uses abbreviation signs which are apparently unnecessary, for example above “corners” and “Curwen” – these may signify a doubling of a letter not needed for current spelling practices but their purpose is not clear. This document also provides examples of unusual spelling which can add to the transcriber’s difficulties – whilst “wepe” for “weep” is not hard to decipher, “axed” for “asked” may take more imagination.

Super articulo Examinatus dyvers h r e e

THE CHURCH OF OLD MALTON LISTS ITS ANNUAL INCOME

Ter. L. Old Malton 1611

The most difficult letters in this document are amongst the lower case letters: particularly notice “h”, the two forms of “s”, “e” and the similarities between “r” and “c” as exemplified in ‘particuler’. Amongst the capital letters see “ff” in “First” (as in Elizabeth Beaumont’s will), “R”, “D” as in ‘Deduct’ and “C” as in “County”. A number of abbreviations are used, particularly frequent are “Itm” for “Item” (as seen in earlier examples) and the “per/par” abbreviation, this time for “par” also in “particular” as well as the abbreviation for “and”. “li” for “libri” (pounds) is also frequent. An abbreviation for “pro” appears in “profitts” and “wich” for “which/which” is also found. “Lord”, as in Lord Archbishop is abbreviated as “L LORD”.

h s s particular F D C

R Item and pounds (libri) pro
Note in particular the list of signatures to this document, the majority of them signing by mark (the word “mark” is abbreviated after each name). Amongst the letter forms notice capital “D” and both forms of lower case “s” and of lower case “e”. Capital “J” and “I” are still used interchangeably, see “Jane” and “Isabel”. Many of the abbreviations here have been met in earlier documents: the abbreviation for “and” appears more similar to the modern ampersand (&) than before, “ye” and “yt” for “the” and “that” appear as does “mt” for ment - seen here in “instrument” (seen before in Elizabeth Beaumont’s will as part of “Testament”). “Under” with its “er” abbreviation is a reminder of the declaration of penance, and a similar abbreviation appears here for “ur” in “our”.

THE PARISHIONERS OF LIVERTON COMPLAIN OF NEGLECT
Bp C & P I/13

This piece is in a relatively clear hand, typical of private letters of the date. Amongst the letter forms notice the letter at the start of words such as “us” and “upon” (perhaps suggesting that a special form of the interchangeable u/v was used for he start of words) and the several forms of lower case “e” - two exemplified together in “parisheners” and see also “searvis”. The formation of lower case “e” is particularly noticable in “searvis” - “Lowde” demonstrates how this formation can lead to confusion between “e” and “o” in some cases. There are few abbreviations used in this document, only “Ld” for “Lord” and “Mr” for “Master”, perhaps reflecting the fact that the writer was not a professional scribe. The most notable points in the letter are its spelling which demonstrates the lack of standard spelling at this date since the spelling of words changes even within the document itself (see, for instance, “deivine” and “divine”) suggesting the phonetic nature of spelling. Note also the differences between modern punctuation and that used here, where commas can appear even within a word – see “Commande”.
THE LATE THOMAS ETHERINGTON'S GOODS ARE RECORDED
Precentorship wills, Jan. 1589/90

This clear sixteenth century hand makes use of both the usual set of abbreviations, such as the “es” abbreviation in “cattalles” and “instrumentes” and “wth” for “with”, and of abbreviations for money, as in “li” for “libri” (the Latin for “pounds”) as well as the usual pre-decimal “s” and “d” (actually standing for solidi and denarii, the Latin forms of shillings and pence). Here “Item” (meaning “also”) frequently found in lists, is abbreviated “It” rather than “Itm” as in other documents in this booklet. Although the hand seems so clear, the similarities between certain letters, or letters and abbreviations, could cause confusion. Other letters to take particular care with are lower case and capital “r” and lower case “k”.

THE PARISHIONERS OF BURTON PIDSEY COMPLAIN OF DESERTION
HC CP nd/3

This is a relatively clear hand with letter forms which are typical of this date – note the lower case “h”, clearer in words such as “sheweth” than later in the document on, and the ascender of “d”, leaning so far to the left in words such as “said” that it could be mistaken for an abbreviation mark. There are three forms of lower case “s”; and lower case “w”, as in “towards”, could also cause confusion with its tendency to intrude upon other letters. The use of “ff” for capital “F” is exemplified in “Flanders”. Note too the possible confusion between lower case “s”, as in “example”, and lower case “p”, as in “please”. Amongst the abbreviations note “g” for “grace” in the opening address and the “per/par” abbreviation this time for “parishers”, and the use of “.” as an abbreviation for common first names – here “Tho:” for Thomas.

ELIZABETH COWLTON COMPLAINS OF ILL-TREATMENT
HC CP 1624/3

This hand is notably different to that in the Musgrave court case, although produced again for the courts – as part of a set of articles this was written at leisure in advance. The most notable features are its ascenders and descenders which give the hand a somewhat cramped appearance. Amongst these note in particular lower case “d”, with its ascender leaning towards the left: notice too the two different versions of this letter, one more open used at the start of the word, and the other in the middle or end of words – see “doth” and “said”. Other letters to particularly note are lower case “h”, found in two slightly differing forms (see “she” and “nether”), lower case “c” with the accent above it, very common at this date, the two forms of lower case “s” and capital “C”. Abbreviations are common within this piece. The repeated phrase ‘Item she doth propound and article’ which starts each new numbered article includes the abbreviation “Itm” for “item” (also) seen elsewhere in this booklet, the “pro” abbreviation in “propound” and “arle” for “article”. “With” either alone or in “within” is regularly abbreviated, but interestingly “and”, a frequently abbreviated word in other documents, is not. Also note particularly the “per” abbreviation in “perell”, easily mistaken for an additional loop to the letter rather than the standard “per” abbreviation with a line through the descender of the “p”.

18
JOHN CLITHEROW IS BOUND FOR HIS WIFE’S GOOD BEHAVIOUR

HC BOND 101

This document is in a clear secretary hand. It makes little use of abbreviations. The “cion” abbreviation is repeated several times: in “condicion” and “obligacion” whilst the word “prisoner” contains a clear example of the “er/re” abbreviation sign and the “per/par” abbreviation appears in both “parish” and “persons” demonstrating its two uses within the one document. Amongst the letter forms note particularly the use of “v” for “u” particularly at the start of the word, see “unles”, and the two forms of lower case “h” in “she” and “that”. Note too the two different spellings of Clitherow in the piece, suggesting, like the letter sent by the parishioners of Liverton, the phonetic nature of spelling at this date.

JOHN CLITHEROW IS FINED FOR HIS WIFE’S BEHAVIOUR

HC AB 9 fo.165

The mixture of English and Latin in this court book entry is typical of the High Commission act books of this date, but increases the problems of transcription. The difficulty of the handwriting can be accounted for by the nature of the document: in the High Commission court both the heading and contents for each case were written down with speed at the time of the hearing. This causes both the classic secretary hand problem of descenders interfering with words in the line below and the added confusion caused by errors and erasures. The majority of the abbreviations come within the Latin but notice the use of the “es” abbreviation in “bondes” and “afterwardes”. In addition to letters such as lower case “h” which frequently cause confusion in these hands, a number of letters appear in more than one form. See lower case “r” in “contra” and “Margaretam”; lower case “s” in “this”, “is” and “husband”, lower case “c” in “church” and “contra” and “d” at the end of “husband” and the start of “deinde”.

es h r r s s c c d d